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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013

Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.29/Rev.1

Eighteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/66/11) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.29/Rev.1 on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto.

2. The Advisory Committee notes that the requests contained in paragraph 6 of the draft resolution would give rise to additional requirements for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for an additional week of meeting time per year, to be used consecutive to an existing regular session, bearing in mind the requirements of the Committee for reasonable accommodation, and without prejudice to the ongoing process of reform aimed at strengthening the treaty body system.

3. With respect to the necessity of the proposed additional week of meeting time per year, the Advisory Committee enquired concerning the status of the backlog of reports from States parties to the Convention pending review. The Advisory Committee was informed that the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had examined 2 of the 24 reports received to date, and that at the current pace of considering one report in a one-week session, it would take 11 years to review the remaining 22 reports. However, with the proposed additional week of

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meeting time to be used consecutive to an existing one-week session, three reports could be examined in a two-week session, taking into consideration that some parts of the meeting process, such as drafting, consultation and translation, did not require formal meeting time and several dialogues with States parties could be scheduled one immediately following another. It was therefore anticipated that, with a one-week session and a two-week session per year, 4 reports could be reviewed per year and the time to review the 22 pending reports would be reduced from 11 to 5 and one half years. The Advisory Committee was also informed that an additional 76 reports from States parties were due by the end of 2011.

4. Upon request for clarification as to the requirements for reasonable accommodation, the Advisory Committee was informed that in the context of the draft resolution the requirements would involve provision for documentation in Braille, captioning and additional meeting time for adoption of texts (in order to permit the reading of each paragraph for those members with impaired vision), as well as improvements in the physical environment.

5. Regarding accessibility at the United Nations as a whole, the Advisory Committee notes that in paragraph 11 of the draft resolution the Secretary-General is requested to continue the progressive implementation of standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services of the United Nations system, in particular when undertaking renovations, including interim arrangements. The Committee was informed that an interdepartmental task force was reviewing how to make the United Nations more accessible. It was indicated to the Advisory Committee that, ideally, the Organization should provide the services and facilities called for in the Convention with respect to meetings, documents and facilities. This was being pursued progressively, with the related costs being a consideration. As for accessibility to all websites of the United Nations, the Committee was informed upon enquiry that the Department of Public Information had promulgated guidelines for all United Nations websites to improve their accessibility to persons with disabilities (available from http://www.un.org/webaccessibility). The website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was now largely compliant with the guidelines; the other websites of the United Nations system had attained various levels of accessibility.

6. **As for the interdepartmental task force mentioned in paragraph 5 above, the Advisory Committee expects that the findings of the review undertaken by the task force will help to improve coordination on issues related to accessibility within the United Nations system. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Advisory Committee requests that the Secretary-General continue to progressively implement standards and guidelines for improved accessibility.**

7. The Advisory Committee notes the existence of multiple mandates on disability issues at the United Nations and was informed upon enquiry that these mandates included the following: (a) the Special Rapporteur on Disability, established in 1993 to promote the implementation of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (then the highest international standards in the area of disability rights) — the mandate has been renewed and continues to the present day (serviced by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs); (b) the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, established under the terms of the Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities, which currently represent the highest international legal standards, in contrast to the United Nations Standard Rules, which do not have the status of binding international law; (c) the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development, an intergovernmental process which is not limited to the disability rights perspective but considers disability issues in the broader framework of development (serviced by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs); and (d) the annual Conference of States Parties to the Convention, where the States parties convene to focus on their implementation of the Convention (serviced by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs). The Advisory Committee notes that the multiple mandates on disability issues were established at different times through different processes and are currently serviced by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will continue to work together, to the extent feasible, in accordance with their mandates and in the most effective manner possible.**

8. According to the Secretary-General, the additional requirements under the terms of paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.29/Rev.1 would amount to $1,496,600 per year, or $2,993,200 for the biennium 2012-2013. The additional amount would provide for the members of the Committee to remain in Geneva for one additional week, and the related conference-servicing costs associated with interpretation into official languages plus sign language, and translation and publication of documentation, including in Braille (A/C.5/66/11, paras. 4 and 5). The detailed breakdown of the requirements under sections 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, 24, Human rights, and 29E, Administration, Geneva, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 is provided in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's statement.

9. As indicated in the Secretary-General's statement (ibid., paras. 4, 7 and 8), the additional requirements of $2,993,200, which were not foreseen in the programme of work, were not included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013. Further, the Secretary-General indicates that, at the current stage, it is not possible to identify activities within the relevant sections of the proposed programme budget that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium. It would therefore be necessary for additional resources in the amount of $2,993,200 to be provided through an additional appropriation for the biennium 2012-2013.

10. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.29/Rev.1, additional resource requirements in the total amount of $2,993,200 would be required for the biennium 2012-2013 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management ($2,770,800); section 24, Human rights ($213,600); and section 29E, Administration, Geneva ($8,800). Under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, those provisions would represent a charge against the contingency fund.**